

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, SP

SUBJ: PRESS EDITORIAL ON BASES

1. OCTOBER 8 EDITION OF MORNING NEWSPAPER ABC CARRIED FULL PAGE EDITORIAL ENTITLED "LOOKING FOR PEACE" REPEATING FAMILIAR THEME THAT SPAIN WITH NEITHER VOICE NOR VOTE IN NATO AFFAIRS IS ASSUMING RISK OF NUCLEAR RETALIATION IN BEHALF OF NATO MEMBERS. PERHAPS A NEW DIMENSION, HOWEVER, IS THE ESSENTIALLY NEUTRALIST TONE OF THE EDITORIAL--IT DOES NOT NECESSARILY ADVOCATE NATO MEMBERSHIP FOR SPAIN--AND FACT THAT IT WAS WRITTEN BY RAMON SERRANO SUNER, FORMER SPANISH FOREIGN MINISTER AND BROTHER-IN-LAW OF GENERAL FRANCO.

2. BEGINNING HALF OF EDITORIAL IS DEVOTED TO TREATISE ON MAN'S QUEST FOR IMPROVEMENT OF HIS CONDITION, HIS ILLUSIONS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS, CULMINATING IN CURRENT "BALANCE OF TERROR" BETWEEN SUPER POWERS, WASTEFUL ARMS
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RACE, AND THREAT OF ANNIHILATION OF HUMANITY.

3. WITH TERMINATION OF LONG PHILOSOPHICAL PROLOGUE, EDITORIAL THEN ARRIVES AT MAIN POINT. QUOTE: IN THESE CONDITIONS IT HARDLY APPEARS ADVISABLE FOR THE NECESSARILY PASSIVE COUNTRIES IN CONTEST OF SUCH NATURE TO ADD TO DANGERS DERIVING FROM THEIR PASSIVENESS WITH OTHER DANGERS EMANATING FROM THEIR LEASING OF MILITARY BASES TO THE TWO SUPERPOWERS. IN SPAIN'S CASE THIS IS DIFFICULT TO JUSTIFY BEFORE THE PUBLIC CONSCIENCE, BECAUSE SPAIN IS NOT PART OF NATO AND AS A CONSEQUENCE WILL HAVE NEITHER VOICE NOR VOTE AT THE HOUR WHEN QUESTION OF WAR IS DECIDED. IN THAT SITUATION SPAIN WILL BE IMMEDIATELY DRAWN IN BECAUSE IT IS IN RANGE OF SOVIET BLOC AIR STRIKES AND BECAUSE IT MAINTAINS IN ITS TERRITORY DEFENSIVE-OFFENSIVE INSTALLATIONS OF THE RIVAL SUPER POWER"

4. "THESE BASES CAN THUS BE PUT ON STATE ON ALERT--AS IT APPEARS TO HAVE ALREADY OCCURRED--WITHOUT OUR HAVING ANYTHING TO SAY ABOUT IT. WE ARE IN EFFECT LANDLORDS, NOT TRUE ALLIES IN A SITUATION INCOMPATIBLE WITH OUR SOVEREIGNTY. CAN THE UTILITY OF THE BASES BE ASCERTAINED IN FACE OF THE RISK THEY CARRY?"

5. "WE ARE ACCUSTOMED TO HEARING THAT SPAIN, LIKE THE REST OF EUROPE, WOULD ALWAYS BE THREATENED BY SOVIET ACTION IF THE "CASUS BELLI" CAME ABOUT. POSSIBLY THIS MAY BE SO, BUT THE RISK IF THEY (THE BASES) WERE DONE AWAY WITH WOULD NOT BE SO IMMEDIATE NOR SO INEVITABLE. WITHOUT THEM WE MIGHT SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE CONFLICT, BUT WITH THEM WE ARE INVITING THE FIRST SHOTS WHICH WOULD BE SUFFICIENT IN A NUCLEAR WAR TO WIPE SPAIN FROM THE MAP."

6. EDITORIAL CONCLUDES ON NOTE THAT ANY OPPORTUNITY IS TIMELY FOR NEW ASSESSMENT ON MATTER OF SUCH GRAVITY.

7. NO DOUBT EDITORIAL HAS ATTRACTED OFFICIAL ATTENTION. MFA OFFICIALS, FOR EXAMPLE, WERE QUICK TO COMMENT ON IT TO EMBASSIES WHO WERE AT MINISTRY ON OTHER MATTERS MORNING IT APPEARED. JOAQUIN ZAVALA, PERINAT'S DEPUTY FOR NORTH AMERICAN AFFAIRS THOUGHT THIS WAS SIGN AMERICANS "TASK WAS GOING TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BE DIFFICULT."
RIVERO

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